

JUL 28 1956

House Remodeling Is Such Sweet Sorrow

CPYRGHT

FOIAb3b

Archie and Selwa Roosevelt had a hysterical and splendid time ripping asunder an old house in the Georgetown section of Washington and putting it back together, old-new and lovely. Just before press time Mrs. Roosevelt issued this footnote to her page 32 account of the remodeling chaos: "We've already discovered a few mistakes in our architectural judgment." Boy, don't they all? Oh, nothing too serious, the lady assures. Sometimes she must needs remark to her spouse, "If you'd done that the way I wanted —" And the spouse to her: "After all the time you took making up your mind, how *could* you make such a mistake?" This may go on for years, but no matter—"It's a happy house; it seems to like us as much as we like it."

A footnote, also, from Ollie Atkins, who, by taking progress-photographs month after month, contributed no little to the remodeling demoralization. "As workmen ripped up a floor, in I would dash and set up all my gear; then in would dash Mrs. Roosevelt, dressed in the last word of fashion, and I would plant her in a floor-ripping scene. Trouble was that by the time I had the picture made, she would have changed her mind and informed the outraged workmen that what they were doing must be done differently." Once when Atkins had Selwa posing with the only paper hanger who still wasn't too mad to speak to her, in walked a fire inspector. He left in a daze, for Mrs. Roosevelt figured he was one of the men installing the furnace and much confusion ensued.

For Atkins' last picture the Roosevelts and two friendly couples were to pose at the dinner table, the men wearing formal dress from the waist up. Then the hostess decided to throw a real dinner party, but the picture couples, having another date, couldn't hang around for that; so Mrs. Roosevelt invited another batch of couples to arrive thirty minutes after photographing time. Dinner functions do not often have second-table guests check in about the same time that earlier diners nap up from the table, the gentlemen change from Tuxedos to jackets, and, with their wives, hurriedly beat it. Atkins expects he will never forget this assignment.

Of herself Mrs. Roosevelt says, "At age fifteen I decided I wanted to go to Vassar, marry a diplomat, and write." She met Archie Roosevelt about a week before finishing Vassar in 1930, "and three months later I found myself with the nicest husband in the world and a delightful stepson." Mr. Roosevelt is a State Department diplomat, and his wife writes an embassy society column for the Washington Evening Star.